THE UNDERGROUND MAN'S CONFESSION AND HIS AUDIENCE

by Terrence Doody

The narrator of Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground* has two different audiences for his confession: the "gentlemen" he addresses throughout the polemic of Part One, and the reader given to him by his "editor." The Underground Man knows nothing of the reader; and at the end of the polemic, he tries to dismiss the "gentlemen" as a device created for his own convenience.

> I, however, am writing for myself, and wish to declare once and for all that if I write as though I were addressing readers, that is simply because it is easier for me to write in that way. It is merely a question of form, only an empty form—I shall never have readers. I have made this plain already.
>
> I don't wish to be hampered by any restrictions in compiling my notes. I shall not attempt any system or method. I will jot things down as I remember them.
>
> But here, perhaps, someone will take me at my word and ask me: if you really don't count on readers, why do you make such compacts with yourself—and on paper too—that is, that you won't attempt any system or method, that you will jot things down as you remember them, etc., etc.? Why do you keep explaining? Why do you keep apologizing?
>
> Well, there it is, I answer.[1]

The reader is not dismissed so easily, however, for he is still there to read the ensuing notes, which demonstrate that the Underground Man's need for an audience's recognition and confirmation is constant, desperate, and essential. He needs an audience in order to define himself, to realize his identity.[2] Yet he cannot admit to that need, so he cannot entrust himself to anything but a fictionalized audience that he conceives to exploit and then repudiate. It is never "merely a question of form" with the Underground Man; it is, rather, always a question of form. And the forms he uses are ultimately dishonest and self-destructive because he uses them to evade or forestall his own realization.

Dostoevsky's intentions for *Notes from Underground* are different from his narrator's and quite complex; and by placing the polemic first, he sets the reader up to be manipulated into two very different reactions to the Underground Man. If the polemic were to come in its proper chronological

Mr. Doody is Assistant Professor of English at Rice University.

place, after the notes of reminiscence, it would lose much of its cogency and meaning. But faced with it immediately, the reader cannot be sure of the narrator's real motive for confessing, of Dostoevsky's distance from his character, or of his own status as audience. This uncertainty and confusion of distance contribute to the polemic's great credibility and suasive force, and they allow Dostoevsky to make his own argument through the narrator before the narrator is allowed to reveal himself and inadvertently raise questions about his own authority. For if the Underground Man is eventually undermined by his compulsive self-delusion and mistrust, he is initially a faithful and convincing spokesman against the rationalism that Dostoevsky himself finds so dangerous and naive.

The confession is an almost inevitable instrument for the case that both the narrator and author want to make against the social planners whose systems and progressive ideals deny a place to anyone like the Underground Man. A confession is a personal history that seeks to express the essential nature of the self, its ontological truth, to an audience that represents the kind of community the speaker needs to confirm his identity.[3] This need for community is nicely epitomized in the line from Novalis that Conrad took as the epigraph to *Lord Jim:* "It is certain my conviction gains infinitely, the moment another soul will believe in it." Not just any other soul will do as a confessor, however. For the speaker's choice of an audience, his attitude toward it, can be as definitive of himself as anything he then goes on to say. And his motive for seeking an audience in the first place is essential to the reason he presents himself in a confession rather than in some other mode of autobiography.[4]

The Confessions of St. Augustine, for instance, proceed from the conversion that enfolds him in the Christian community and provides him with a comprehensive myth—a theology, a theory of history, and a system of values—that he shares with all orthodox Christians. Augustine addresses his confessions in penitence and gratitude to an omniscient God, who already knows what he is going to say; Augustine publishes them, however, for the sake of the community and the alleviation of his own distress. As an "insider," Augustine can treat his personal history as representative. The events of his life may be interesting and instructive in their own right (especially since Augustine is a famous convert and writes as bishop of Hippo), but their greatest value for the orthodox audience is that Augustine can interpret them to demonstrate the necessity of grace and benefits of conversion. In this respect, his confessions are an act of solidarity with the community that shares his belief, a rite of mutual confirmation. For a more intimate audience of friends, however, Augustine writes in an unanticipated literary form in an attempt to define himself. For the conversion that interrupts his life and re-defines him rather intensifies than assuages Augustine's famous restlessness, and he writes out of the realization that his conversion

alone has not provided any "final security."[5] So in examining the pressure the past still exerts and the temptations that continue to bother him, he opens himself to the solace of his friends' companionship and prayers. Augustine's need to know himself in the eyes of his immediate company and his interest in his ineluctably private experience are exactly what make his confessions more than simply a Christian apology and what make Augustine himself accessible to the nonbelievers who can share his sense of introspective loneliness, his dislocation in time, and all the difficulties, as Stevens says, of "what it is to be."

Rousseau writes his confessions out of the need for a similar confirmation and solace. But his need is, perhaps, more extreme than Augustine's because Rousseau's confessions follow upon a crisis, his decision (around 1750) to repudiate the conventions of his society and to live according to the principle of his own nature. He confesses, therefore, to justify that decision by justifying himself, ontologically; and he does not have the orthodox audience or circle of friends to rely on that Augustine has. For Rousseau defines himself as an "outsider" and writes *against* what has been his natural community, all those people who no longer understand him. The audience he addresses, after a perfunctory invocation of the Deity, is the community of readers that will be created by virtue of its sympathy for him.

> It was not so much my literary celebrity as the change in my character, which dates from this time, that evoked their jealousy; they would perhaps have forgiven me for brilliance in the act of writing; but they could not forgive me for setting up an example by my conduct; this appeared to put them out. I was born for friendship; my easy and gentle disposition had no difficulty in fostering it. So long as I lived unknown to the public, I was loved by all who knew me, and had not a single enemy. But as soon as I made a name I ceased to have friends. That was a very great misfortune. A still greater one was that I was surrounded by people who took the name of friend, and used the rights it gave them only to drag me to my undoing.[6]

This statement probably has its share of the disingenuous, but it does reveal Rousseau's need for the sympathy and understanding, indeed for the friendship, that will ratify his decision and prove his essential self still lovable.

Though Rousseau is a formidable rhetorician (and a famous polemicist as Augustine was), in his confessions he says he need only be honest, be himself, for his just readers to render a favorable verdict.

> I should like in some way to make my soul transparent to the reader's eye, and for that purpose I am trying to present it from all points of view, to show it in all lights, and to contrive that none of its movements shall escape his notice, so that he may judge for himself of the principle which has produced them. (169)

> My duty is to tell the truth; my readers' to be just, and that is all that I shall ever ask of them. (335)

Yet, clearly Rousseau asks for more than justice and courts the reader

constantly by showing him how treacherous most other people are, even his wife and his friend Diderot. Rousseau's strategy in this is designed to foster the sympathy he needs because it encourages the reader to think of himself as also "born for friendship," more sensitive and understanding than others, less mean-spirited and conventional.

Like Rousseau, the Underground Man is motivated by the crisis of his isolation. But in the polemic he never treats it as a crisis; he treats it as an advantage for the superior insight it affords. So he too writes against his audience: explicitly trying to dominate the gentlemen as though to win a debate; implicitly defining himself by his opposition. The outsider may have some doubts about who he is exactly, but he usually knows what he is not; if he cannot be sure of who will comprise his sympathetic audience, he can define quite clearly who it will not be. In arguing against the "gentlemen," the Underground Man seems also to be arguing *through* them to an audience he cannot yet identify, for it is an audience he will create in the process of defining himself.

To do this, the Underground Man makes no pretense about his honesty or humility; he never overtly courts the audience or seeks its sympathy. On the contrary, he argues his case with great, aggressive self-confidence in order to defeat the "gentlemen" and destroy their rationalist position, and he begins his attack in the first sentence—"I am a sick man . . . I am a spiteful man"—when he puts off the sympathetic response his illness could evoke by immediately changing his plea to a much less sympathetic cause.[7] Then he admits to a lie he could never have been suspected of; and by doing so, he indicates how enthusiastically he will manipulate the conventions and expectations of his discourse. He makes himself a difficult man to answer because he pursues his argument with such speed, through so many shifts of tone and attitude, that there is no logical principle on which to build a response. For instance, after arguing quite seriously about the problems of acting on the basis of a primary cause, he immediately begins the ironic celebration of the "loafer"—"why, after all, it is a calling and an appointment, it is a career, gentlemen" (17). And these remarks slide through a parody of the esthete's devotion to "the sublime and the beautiful" into the serious argument that freedom of choice is in itself a more "advantageous advantage" than the pursuit of enlightened self-interest.

Although he cannot readily be anticipated at any turn in his argument, the narrator nonetheless keeps silencing the "gentlemen" by anticipating their objections and turning them into the evidence of his own insight, authority, and control.

> It is so subtle, sometimes so difficult to analyze consciously, that somewhat limited people, or simply people with strong nerves, will not understand anything at all in it. "Possibly," you will add on your own account with a grin, "people who have never received a slap in the face will not understand it either," and in that way you will politely

> hint to me that I, too, perhaps, have been slapped in the face in my life, and so I speak as an expert. I'll bet that you are thinking that. But set your minds at rest, gentlemen. I have not received a slap in the face, though it doesn't matter to me at all what you may think about it. Possibly, I even myself regret that I have given so few slaps in the face during my life. But enough, not another word on the subject of such extreme interest to you. (11)

Moreover, he neutralizes even *ad hominem* objections by defiantly admitting to every fault he knows himself to have. For instance: "You laugh? I am delighted. My jokes, gentlemen, are of course in bad taste, uneven, involved, lacking self-confidence. But of course that is because I do not respect myself. Can a man with consciousness respect himself at all?" (14). In arguing like this, the Underground Man is at once defiant, condescending, deliberately outrageous; sometimes he is even funny, as when he says: ". . . for I'll go on living to sixty myself. I'll live till seventy! Till eighty! Wait, let me catch my breath" (5). But he never seems desperate, for he is always in command of his own position, his argument, his audience, and his style.

In the course of the polemic, the narrator becomes the most convincing evidence of the case he is making.[8] This "self-authorization" is obviously necessary for any outsider who, in explaining his own experience, cannot invoke the full support of shared conventions (as Augustine can use the language of Scripture to formulate even his most private experience); and the need for the confessional speaker to authorize himself is the source of both his *style* and of the intense rhetoric that confessions support so well. Because it deals with essential self, the confession is a natural mode of expression for the alienated; but more than that, it is also a natural opportunity for the discovery and articulation of a new mode of being. Confessions like Augustine's and Rousseau's have been the issue not only of their personal situations, but also of critical, transitional periods in history when an exact definition of the self has become important for an entire culture. Augustine's audience lived through the fall of Rome and in an era of great theological controversy. And Rousseau's audience, of course, has come to see him as a great spokesman, if not the innovator, of a major phase in modern Western culture. In both cases, a prophetic authority has accrued to each of them from the immediate audiences that have seen in each confession a truer image of themselves.

The presence of the "gentlemen" in the polemic indicates that it is Dostoevsky's plan to give his narrator some prophetic authority, at least temporarily, by bringing the reader as close as possible to the narrator's position throughout Part One. For these "gentlemen" are so easily mastered that they are, like Rousseau's ex-friends, rhetorical whipping boys from whom the reader is strongly encouraged to distance himself. As the reader moves away from them and their beliefs, he moves necessarily closer to the Underground Man; and in doing so, he moves toward something like the Under-

ground Man's "hyper-consciousness," which is an excessive but valuable quality in these circumstances and the virtue the Underground Man has to offer.

As an opponent of rationalism and all its systems, the narrator cannot propose another system as an alternative. The "will" he argues for is, as the method of his own argument demonstrates, anti-systematic. He can only hope to expose the fallacy of rationalist assumptions, counter their abstractions with the example of his own experience, and liberate whatever audience he has into self-conscious individuality. So, in one sense, he is perfectly right in denying the existence of an audience he keeps addressing, for this too thwarts a rational expectation and becomes a paradox that, like all the other paradoxes he explores, keeps his argument open-ended and leaves his audience self-consciously suspended in the argument's general irresolution. As Robert M. Adams says:

> A characteristic, then, of one sort of open-formed work is the direct and unmediated quality of its relation to the audience. By imputing to its reader no character at all, or condition purely negative, the work in closed form disguises or minimizes its essentially relativist relation to the reader. Works in the open form make this relativism explicit. They often imply an image of man as an essentially divided and self-antagonistic creature. Although he may be ignorant of this fact at first, the work brings him to a realization of it; and to do so it must stand at once closer to the reader and further from its own actions or characters. Its proper effect always precludes simple identification between reader and character; an element of self-consciousness enters into the proper reaction to the work in open form.[9]

Adams's description of the effect of open form is a fairly accurate, if moderate, description of what the Underground Man himself seems to stand for and wish his audience to recognize: not "simple identification," but the self-consciousness that admits to "the image of man as an essentially divided and self-antagonistic creature."

So, before the unfolding of Part Two, the narrator sounds pretty much like what he wants to be: a superior intelligence in radical opposition to modern society. And he has convinced the reader, given to him by Dostoevsky, of the validity of his argument against the rationalist "gentlemen." This effect is not the end of *Notes from Underground,* however. Dostoevsky has more to reveal about his narrator and a serious qualification to apply. And Dostoevsky's reader comes to understand this qualification as he is allowed to acquire some distance from the narrator by seeing him in circumstances where other audiences have met him and have been allowed to respond. These encounters reveal the Underground Man's motive for confessing as he does and prove that the strategy he adopts for the polemic is not simply a brilliant technique, but the result of a compulsion that has determined his whole life.[10] For this man with no name, who says he "slavishly worshipped the conventional in everything external" (38), and whose fantasy life is often an act of plagiarism, cannot open or entrust

himself to anyone else. Instead he plays roles and he hopes, by the strength of his performance, to cast everyone he meets into the role of an audience that will validate his new persona. He has been driven underground because his earlier roles have all failed: he could neither sustain his own part, nor compel his audiences to maintain theirs. In retrospect, therefore, the polemic comes to be seen as a superior version of the performances he has been giving with less success throughout his whole life because, for the polemic, he has invented an audience that cannot respond to deny him.

One of Dostoevsky's fundamental points is that the narrator, who argues so well for the freedom of the individual at almost any cost, cannot be free alone. He must be free before someone who will validate his freedom, so he must rely on a form like the confession which is designed to give him the audience he needs. This use of confession is perfectly appropriate, but the Underground Man ultimately abuses the confession's formal intention by excluding from his audience any real reader. He is confessing to himself, and undermining even this are the revelations in the narrative that he does not know he is making.

The first major episode of Part Two is the narrator's least successful attempt to create an audience out of the officer in the tavern who refuses to recognize his presence and moves him like a piece of furniture. The narrator has no immediate response because he fears the "literary" strategies he first considers will be jeered at and the *point d'honneur* misunderstood. Some years later, he writes a satire against the officer, which goes unpublished because the particular convention is by then outmoded. Later still, he writes a similarly anachronistic letter, demanding an apology and proposing a duel, which he hopes will reveal the fineness of his sensibility and move the officer "to fling himself on my neck and offer me his friendship" (45). He never sends the letter, of course, and finally decides he must settle for a humbler form of recognition by bumping into the man on the Nevsky. Yet even this physical response, which is years late, involves a role and reliance on convention because the Underground Man has to dress up to play the part of a boulevardier.

Despite all of this deliberateness, he finally acts out of impulse.

> The night before I had made up my mind not to carry out my fatal plan, and to abandon it all, and with that goal in mind I went to the Nevsky for the last time, just to see how I would abandon it all. Suddenly, three paces from my enemy, I unexpectedly made up my mind—I closed my eyes, and we ran full tilt, shoulder to shoulder, into each other! I did not budge an inch and passed him on a perfectly equal footing! He did not even look around and pretended not to notice it; but he was only pretending, I am convinced of that. I am convinced of that to this day! Of course, I got the worst of it—he was stronger, but that was not the point. The point was that I had attained my goal, I had kept up my dignity. I had not yielded a step, and had put myself publicly on an equal social footing with him. (48-49)

The narrator's claim that the officer only pretended not to notice is itself a

pretense that is now the narrator's only means of "controlling" the officer's response. What the reader notices, however, is the narrator's self-deception. For it is clear, from the narrator's own account, that the officer did not notice. And what the reader hears in place of the flip self-deprecation of the polemic is a strident insistence that discloses the narrator's need for both personal acceptance and a sustaining belief in his own intelligence. At this point, it is difficult to hold that the Underground Man understands himself in a way that would have allowed him to achieve the performance of Part One.

The Underground Man is a bit more successful in subsequent episodes as he creates situations that allow him to talk. Again out of impulse, he talks himself into Simonov's party for Zverkov. He knows these men from his school days, and they even make some attempt to include him graciously. If they are not an eager audience to the narrator's role of old school chum and fellow gallant, they are at least more accessible than the officer from the tavern and more willing to play along. However, the narrator's loathing for himself and the entire situation eventually breaks down all semblances of accord. After insults, recriminations, and too much to drink, he begins stomping up and down the room while the others continue the party. He demonstrates his integrity by his "silence," but he cannot simply go because departure would mean relinquishing the audience before whom he must display his superiority and contempt. The scene ends when his audience walks out on him.

At the end of Part One, the Underground Man says that one reason for writing these episodes from his past is "to be able to criticize myself and improve my style" (36). Throughout the polemic, though, he has argued that improvement or progress of any kind is impossible. In principle he has implied that style is the man; in practice he does not accept the fatalistic limitations of Buffon's formula. For the Underground Man's solution to the failure of one role or style is the adoption of another, with the unstated hope that a new persona will constitute a new personality. So, as he follows his retreating audience to the brothel, he fantasizes a role in which he wins a spectacular revenge against Zverkov. Then he admits that the fantasy is taken from Pushkin and Lermontov. This admission is not the kind of self-criticism he has promised; the fantasy is a stylistic improvement only in so far as the *imaginary* Zverkov cannot now ignore the narrator's act. As the Underground Man pursues his audience in quest of an identity, it becomes clear that he can never change himself. He can only hope to win a more pliable, submissive witness—like the "gentlemen" of the polemic who are held to silence, or Liza the prostitute.

Initially, Liza is the narrator's most suitable audience. Young, inexperienced, submissive by profession, she provides him with the opportunity for his most voluble performance: "I began to feel myself what I was saying

and warmed to the subject. I was already longing to expound the cherished *little ideas* I had brooded over in my corner. Something suddenly flared up in me. An object had 'appeared' before me" (81). The Underground Man goes on to celebrate the standard pieties of love, marriage, and life at home. Toward the end of his speech, he admits to being "really excited" by his own performance. Liza herself recognizes that he is merely rehearsing conventions: "Why you—you speak exactly like a book," she says (86). But the intensity of the Underground Man's act eventually crushes her. In accepting all of the loathing and defeat he projects onto her, she accepts in effect his definition of her as the kind of audience she should play to his role of enlightened, compassionate freedom.

The Underground Man is aware of Liza's suffering; he is even troubled by it and eager to release her, to escape her. Nevertheless, his first act the following day is indicative of the self-concern that blinds him to a real understanding of the forms he uses for his public roles. Apparently inspired by his success with Liza, he returns home to write an apology to Simonov for his behavior at the party.

> To this hour I am lost in admiration when I recall the truly gentlemanly, good-natured, candid tone of my letter. With tact and good taste, and, above all, entirely without superfluous words, I blamed myself for all that had happened. . . . I was especially pleased with that "certain lightness," almost carelessness (strictly within the bounds of politeness, however), which was suddenly reflected in my style, and better than any possible arguments, gave them at once to understand that I took rather an independent view of "all that unpleasantness last night"; that I was by no means so utterly crushed as you, gentlemen, probably imagine; but on the contrary that I looked at it as a gentleman serenely respecting himself should. "On a young hero's past no censure it cast!"
>
> "There is, after all, even an aristocratic playfulness about it!" I thought admiringly, as I read over the letter. (95)

The Underground Man is no more aware of his self-deception here than he is about the success of his encounter with the officer on the Nevsky. It does not occur to him that Simonov would be able to see through the postures of "tact," "good taste," and "the young hero's past," for the narrator's insight into his audience is only as sharp as his insight into himself. So, it comes as no real surprise that he cannot accept Liza when she comes, later that day, to profess her love. For in complying with the Underground Man's wishes, she is also breaking character by asking him to respond to her authentically. His authentic response is terror and brutal cynicism. Yet he chases after her down the street because it is as difficult for him to relinquish an audience as it is to fire his servant Apollon, who is his most constant audience and the easy winner of all the power games the Underground Man tries to play.

Throughout these episodes, the Underground Man seems to feel, not that he is misunderstood, but understood only too well, especially by Liza and Apollon. At the end, he also seems to fear that the non-existent

"gentlemen" understand him too. As he tries to bring his notes to a close, he once again anticipates their objections and seems momentarily to side with them against the "anti-hero" he has created in his "story." But he can sustain this alliance, which suggests both a critical distance from himself and a trust in others, no longer than he can sustain the earlier claim that his address is only an empty form. For immediately he turns on the "gentlemen" and justifies his own courageous sense of "real life."

> "Speak for yourself," you will say, "and for your miseries in your underground holes, but don't dare say 'all of us.'" Excuse me, gentlemen, after all I do not mean to justify myself with "all of us." As for what concerns me in particular I have only, after all, in my life carried to an extreme what you have not dared to carry halfway, and what's more, you have taken your cowardice for good sense, and have found comfort in deceiving yourselves. So that perhaps, after all, there is more "life" in me than in you. Look into it more carefully! After all, we don't even know where living exists now, what it is, and what it is called. . . . We are even oppressed by being men with real individual body and blood. . . . Soon we shall somehow contrive to be born from an idea. (115)

The irony of these last lines is almost pat: no one is more oppressed by his real individuality than the Underground Man; no one labors more anxiously to realize a self-conception.

The narrator's final tone sets in high relief the calm, uninsistent authority of the "editor's" final note. At a sudden and obvious distance from the Underground Man, the editor speaks directly to the reader with the assurance that they understand the narrator so well, almost nothing need be said. His understatement is convincing and even eloquent: "The 'notes' of this paradoxalist do not end here, however. He could not resist and continued them. But it also seems to me that we may stop here."

It has been argued recently that "The fact that his diatribe is cut off by his editor does not in any sense weaken the case of the Underground Man but only proves that his argument is beyond resolution."[11] Yes, but his argument is not the only thing at stake. Dostoevsky locates the polemic first so that it may have its full effect, but he does not locate the identity of his narrator in the polemic alone. Moreover, by making *Notes from Underground* a confession rather than a journal, a diary, or a lyric narrative (like Camus's *The Stranger*), Dostoevsky emphasizes the formal importance of all the audiences the Underground Man addresses—including the reader, who is immediately engaged by the Underground Man but never acknowledged as necessary. All modes of autobiography are incomplete, open-ended, unresolved. But by making its formal commitment to an audience, the confession finds an end for its own activity in the community it can sponsor. And it is precisely because the narrator cannot entrust himself to anyone else that he violates his confession and loses control of it. His argument against the rationalists stands, but he falls into the empty freedom of the rhetoric he addresses to no one.

The Underground Man has said that Rousseau told lies to his audience out of vanity, but that he will tell the truth because he has no real audience to entertain (35). However, the Underground Man does not know the full truth about himself; and though the confessional form he adopts and everything he says attest to his need for an audience's confirmation, he does not understand (as Rousseau does) what that audience can do for him: which is to ratify the value and inescapability of his suffering and save him from his isolation. No community—whether it is institutionalized like Augustine's or continually self-generating like Rousseau's—can resolve every human problem. And the reader who subscribes to the values of suffering, experience, and self-knowledge which the Underground Man stands for—and which Dostoevsky wants to rescue from rationalism—cannot resolve the Underground Man's argument either, unless he wants to do so under the auspices of an extrinsic authority like Kierkegaard or Nietzsche. But it is impossible for the reader, who understands more about the Underground Man than he does himself, to attribute to him the superiority he wants so desperately. For through the form of the confession and without any intrusion, Dostoevsky has demonstrated that rationalism is not sufficiently answered by the narrator's romantic existentialism, which defines personal identity in the self alone. So the Underground Man is exactly right, with a terrible double irony, about having no readers. For by the end the readers are all Dostoevsky's, whose own argument is that identity is constituted in the individual's experience of community. As we read the final editorial note and share its understanding, we leave the narrator as abruptly as Simonov left him at the party—all by himself.

NOTES

1. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground* and *The Grand Inquisitor*, ed. and trans. Ralph E. Matlaw (New York: Dutton, 1960), p. 35. All subsequent references will be indicated in the text. Special thanks are due to Roger Anderson of the Slavic Department, University of Kentucky, for his generous aid, suggestions, and criticism.

2. This concept of identity is grounded on Erik H. Erikson's definitions in *Identity, Youth and Crisis* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Incorporated, 1968). See especially the "Prologue."

3. This definition derives from Francis R. Hart, "Notes for an Anatomy of Modern Autobiography," *New Literary History*, I, 3 (Spring, 1970), 491.

4. For another definition of confession, see the argument developed by Peter M. Axthelm, *The Modern Confessional Novel* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967). Axthelm's position is more existentialist; he treats several confessions, including *Notes from Underground*, without considering the formal role of audience.

5. A complete discussion of Augustine's motive, his literary form, and his immediate audience is contained in Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), chapter 16.

6. *The Confessions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau,* trans. J. M. Coheen (Baltimore: Penguin, 1954), p. 338. Subsequent references are indicated in the text.

7. This opening sentence and the narrator's whole performance are analyzed from a completely different perspective by M. M. Bakhtin, "Monologue Speech of the Hero, and Narrative Discourse in the Stories of Dostoevsky—*Notes from Underground.*" *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics,* trans. Richard Balthazar (Moscow: Sovetskij Pisatel', 1963), pp. 305-318. Reprinted in *Notes from Underground,* ed. Robert G. Durgy, trans. Serge Shishkoff, The Crowell Critical Library (New York: Crowell, 1969), pp. 203-216.

8. See Jean Starobinski, "The Style of Autobiography," in *Literary Style: A Symposium,* ed. Seymour Chatman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 285-294.

9. *Strains of Discord: Studies in Literary Openness* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1958), p. 291.

10. Matlaw argues for the unity of the novel in terms of its psychology, themes, and symbols in "Structure and Integration in *Notes from Underground,*" *PMLA,* **72** (1958), 101-109.

11. Reed Merrill, "The Mistaken Endeavor: Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground,*" *MFS,* **18,** No. 4 (Winter, 1972-73), 515.